

more challenging and, folks, a heck of a lot more expensive while at the same time making the world a much more dangerous place. Then, to cover up the connection between his actions and their disastrous outcomes, the President plays the blame game.

Since Joe Biden was sworn in as President just a little over a year ago, we have experienced record-setting inflation, making everyday essentials unaffordable; an unprecedented number of migrants rushing our southern border; our national debt topping \$30 trillion for the first time; the Taliban's retaking control of Afghanistan; and the world being brought to the brink of nuclear war.

Are these events purely the result of chance or are they direct consequences of the choices being made in the White House? You don't need to be a detective to solve this whodunit. Let's go ahead and examine the case.

All right. Over the past year, the cost of nearly everything has increased at the fastest pace in over four decades. A gallon of milk is up nearly 50 cents, and 2 pounds of ground beef costs over \$1.50 more than it did a year ago. Add in rising rents and home prices, and these numbers really add up quickly.

While Iowans and the rest of Americans are struggling to adjust their family budgets to the ever increasing cost of living, the Biden administration has repeatedly dismissed concerns about the price problem.

Last summer, the President said:

It's highly unlikely that it's going to be long-term inflation that's going to get out of hand.

Now that the problem can no longer be ignored, he is actually blaming corporate greed.

Get a clue.

The Federal Reserve says the reason prices in the United States have been outpacing inflation in other countries since 2021—when Biden became President—is as a direct result of Washington's unprecedented spending spree. It turns out you can't just print trillions of dollars and hand it out for free.

Republicans in Congress and even some Democrats warned that this would happen when the President began pushing one trillion-dollar spending bill after another. Now hard-working Americans are stuck paying for the Biden binge-spending twice—first with higher taxes and then again with higher bills. When you add it all up, Bidenomics is costing every family almost \$500 more a month today than a year ago to buy the same exact items.

So, despite the President's finger-pointing, this problem isn't being caused by corporate greed for profits, and it isn't caused on Wall Street.

The White House is using a similar setup to hide the true cause of higher prices at the pump. President Biden wants us to believe that the skyrocketing costs to fill up your tank are all Vladimir Putin's fault, but gas was on the rise for more than a year before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In

fact, gas prices have steadily increased since the President's first day in office when he signed an Executive order to shut down the Keystone XL Pipeline. On that day, January 20, 2021, a gallon of gas cost less than \$2.50. The President then signed an Executive order turning off all new oil and gas leases on public lands.

While the President was shutting down U.S. energy, he was helping to make the world more dependent on Putin for power. In May of last year, the Biden administration waived the sanctions on Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. By then, gas here in the United States had reached \$3 a gallon. When Putin invaded Ukraine in February, the price was already more than \$3.50 per gallon.

So don't be fooled, folks. It is really Biden's war on American energy that has been fueling the soaring costs. While the Russian dictator is guilty of many horrible things, the higher gas prices we have been paying for over the past year and a half did not begin as a result of Putin in Ukraine because of the war.

It is impossible to miss the irony of President Biden's pointing the finger at Putin since the Russian dictator's aggression against Ukraine may have been emboldened by Biden's abrupt abandonment in Afghanistan. The poorly planned evacuation also turned over billions of dollars of weapons and equipment to the Taliban and other terrorists and left countless Americans and our allies behind while costing the lives of 13 of our brave servicemembers.

The President blamed our own military—he blamed our own military—for not warning him of the catastrophe that would occur if he withdrew all U.S. forces, but those claims were contradicted under oath before the Senate Armed Services Committee by his own advisers, who said the President was told Afghanistan would collapse. Try as he might to lay the blame elsewhere, the President singlehandedly made the call to completely withdraw from Afghanistan, which will go down as one of the worst foreign policy decisions in U.S. history.

Now Biden's blunders are threatening to turn the crisis at our southern border into total chaos. The number of illegal crossings last year exceeded 1.7 million—the most ever recorded. To make matters worse, the administration has announced that those attempting to enter our country illegally will soon no longer be turned away under the authority provided by title 42. As a consequence, Homeland Security officials are expecting a record surge of border crossings, which could reach as many as 18,000 people a day.

Just like his other abrupt, poorly thought-out decisions, the President has no plan to deal with the inevitable repercussions. When the predictable disaster occurs, the President will be surprised and confused and look for someone else to blame.

I could go on, but I am all ready to rest my case since the same set of fin-

gerprints is on all of the evidence of these problems.

But, President Biden, if you still haven't figured it out, I will give you a clue. Spoiler alert: The culprit is you.

Whether signing Executive orders to turn off American-made energy or signing budget-busting bills that are fanning the flames of inflation, the source of these problems can all be traced back to President Biden, with the pen, in the Oval Office.

It is right there, folks. Case closed.

That is how all of these crises were created over the past year.

Now, imagine how some of the other policies being proposed by Democrats, like defunding the police, abolishing ICE, or enacting the Green New Deal, could turn out if President Biden is given the chance to sign them into law.

Taxpayers can rest assured that Republicans in Congress will keep doing our part to make sure those bills never make it to the President's desk. And if the President tries to bypass Congress and enact its radical agenda by signing Executive orders behind the closed doors of the White House, Americans can count on Republicans to clue you in.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Tennessee.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, it has been over a year since Joe Biden and KAMALA HARRIS and the Democrats took control of all the government here in DC. They like the fact that they have got their hands on the drivers, and they are enacting their policies. But what is so interesting, as my colleague from Iowa was pointing out, is they continue to try to blame Donald Trump and Republicans for the issues that are in front of us.

Just a few years ago, if you would have asked me how I would evaluate a government that spent their way into inflation—recordbreaking inflation—surrendered our border to the drug cartels, and abandoned two Embassies, I would tell you that that sounds like an administration that is in disarray. I think most people would believe that to be a fact.

But here is the problem: We have moved beyond disarray. Tennesseans feel like it is more like a catastrophe.

This is not mere incompetence at work. Joe Biden is earning his disapproval rating that he was joking about at the Correspondents' Dinner last week. He knows that it is, indeed, low—some of the lowest ever.

The fact is that President Biden and Vice President HARRIS have had a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad year, and they did this to themselves. And now their allies in Congress are ready to make things even worse. They are doubling down.

This is what happens when you try to force an agenda filled with pet projects that the American people are telling you they do not want and, as taxpayers are saying, "You can't afford this."

This is what happens when you really have no vision for the future of the country. It is all about power, all about control.

Last month, the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics released a poll showing that this distinction between agenda and vision actually matters to people. They found that 56 percent of young Americans, ages 18 to 29, disapprove of Joe Biden's job performance. That is correct; 56 percent disapprove. And just last spring, 59—that is right, 59—percent of young persons were still in his corner.

Look at what is happening. Look at that flip that is taking place.

The measure of success or failure for this administration shouldn't come down to how many boxes they can check off their wish list but how many young Americans look at what they are doing, and they say: I can't support this. This does not give me hope. This does not look good for my future.

Indeed, 56 percent of young Americans, ages 18 to 29, disapprove of the Biden agenda.

Right now, this age group, they are losing hope. That same Harvard poll shows that their top concern isn't the environment; it isn't abortion or Roe v. Wade; it is the economy. And why wouldn't it be? The current inflation rate is 8.5 percent. Last year, it was 2.6 percent.

How can anyone be expected to plan for their future if they are struggling to plan for next week's grocery run? They are paying a premium just to live.

Meanwhile, the President is asking them to sacrifice even more so he can check some more boxes on his to-do list that is all about this leftist agenda. It is not about the people; it is about power; it is about control.

Young Americans—and I would say all Americans, Tennesseans—deserve better than this. They deserve leaders who have a vision for the future of this country, who have the God-given common sense to see it through.

Joe Biden and the Democrats have been in power for more than a year. The window for blame-shifting and excuses is closed. It is shut. It is time for the President to abandon this self-destructive agenda and give the American people a fighting chance at reclaiming their own vision for the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, in a moment, I am going to make a motion by unanimous consent to call up, and hopefully confirm, significant appointments in the Department of Defense.

We are in the midst of a war in Europe right now. It is hard to imagine that, and yet it is the case. Every day we see atrocities committed by Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, but every day we also see the concerted

effort of the United States and NATO allies and other nations to provide dramatic support for the Ukrainian defense force and the Ukrainian people.

We honor the Ukrainians' resolve and heroism, and we feel proud of the role that the United States and other nations are playing in providing defense. And I hope we will take additional defense support up on the floor in the days to come. However, this is not easy work to do.

One of the positions that I am going to be seeking a UC on is the DOD Assistant Secretary for Sustainment, Christopher Lowman, who is a Virginian. He and his family live in Fredericksburg.

Mr. Lowman is, according to the committee, completely noncontroversial and very much desired in this position.

He was born in Germany, in a military family, grew up in Virginia, went to college in New Jersey. He was a U.S. marine beginning in 1984, and then after his Active Marine service, entered the Army civil service as an Army maintenance management intern in 1989. And he has been with the Army ever since.

His specialty is logistics. So this Assistant Secretary of Sustainment is kind of the peak logistics officer in the Pentagon.

He previously was the Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology. OK. That is a title that is—you know, what does that actually mean? I will tell you what it means. When the United States is trying to get historic amounts of military aid across a contested border from allied countries into a war zone, we need people who know logistics. It may not be the sexiest part of the military mission, but it is part of the mission that is absolutely critical, and it is part of the mission where the U.S. military is second to none in the world.

If you wonder why the Russian military's grand plans to topple Ukraine in just a couple of days came to naught, you first say it is Ukrainian heroism, and you second say it is the support of our allies, but, third, you have to point out the Russian military has demonstrated that they haven't mastered logistics. The inability to maintain supply chains, the inability to do proper maintenance of tanks and other vehicles is one of the reasons that the Russians have not been able to accomplish their aims. So what this war in Europe is demonstrating is militaries that have the capacity to do logistics and provide supplies to people on the front end of the fight are critical to success.

Given the fact that the United States is the key to pulling together the international effort to provide support to the Ukrainian defense force, and given the fact that that mission depends upon having the best logistics in the world, why would we leave the chief logistics official at the Pentagon

position vacant in the middle of a war when the United States is playing this heroic role?

For that reason, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 477, 599, 777, 779, 780, 781, 861, and 886; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I find myself here on the floor again as my friend the Senator from Virginia, whose sincerity and urgency on this issue I don't doubt for a second, tries to move a whole slate of nominees to which multiple Republican Senators have objections. And let me give you a sense of why.

One of the nominees that my friend is attempting to move here, let's be clear, to do this without a vote—we could be voting on these nominees. The majority leader could schedule votes on them any time, but he hasn't done that. He hasn't done it in some of the cases for months.

This is an act—this is a request to suspend the regular order of the Senate and to confirm these nominees without a vote. Well, I, for one, am not going to consent to confirming without a vote people like Ravi Chaudhary. He is being nominated for Assistant Secretary of the Air Force.

Mr. Chaudhary, who appeared before the Armed Services Committee, on which I sit, as does my friend from Virginia—Mr. Chaudhary has proposed using AI technology—artificial intelligence—to track members of the military, identify them as extremists, and then have them expelled.

He said:

The key to disrupting them—

Meaning “extremists,” his word, people whose views he doesn't agree with.

The key to disrupting them is uncovering and understanding their initial behaviors, elements that are contained in their electronic footprints.

What Mr. Chaudhary has proposed to do is to use surveillance on members of the U.S. military to determine whether they might, in the future, commit acts that he might disapprove of and then to take action against these members of the military.

In 2015, he wrote this: that the military exhibits a “culture of xenophobic cronyism.” And he went on to say that there was a “xenophobic command climate” in the U.S. military today.

I said to Mr. Chaudhary, at the time when we had our hearing, that I cannot